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# KEEPING IN *Focus* WITH PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT



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Office of Personnel Washington 25, D. C.

CONTINUED RECORDS

No. 3

December 20, 1961

## *A Christmas Message To You*

Tiny Tim said it better than I could but,  
Merry Christmas, and "God Bless Us Every-  
one."

That's my wish to all of you. I hope  
each and everyone of you will have all  
the joy and gladness that Christmas  
implies. And that through all of its  
happy celebration, its true significance  
will not be lost.

This is the time of year for good  
fellowship. For doing for those we  
love and for those less fortunate than  
ourselves. It is a time of recollection  
and reflection. We pause from the day's  
occupation, and the magic of Christmas  
takes over. Old memories are revived.  
Old friends and old ties come to mind.

We count our blessings. The score on  
these is high. I am grateful to live in  
a land that is brave and is free. Where  
an abundance of the good things of life  
is ours. And I view with satisfaction  
the part that all employees of USDA  
have had in making this so.

Everybody says Christmas is for the  
children. If that is so, then the  
world is full of big kids. Anyway, I  
hope old Santa fills your Christmas  
stocking to overflowing with all the  
answers to your brightest hopes and  
dreams.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

*Carl Barnes*

Carl B. Barnes



## STAFF, TASK FORCES

## REPORT PROGRESS ON

## PERSONNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

There's a new twist to being  
"in the red."

For task forces working on  
implementation of the 136 rec-  
ommendations made at the Per-  
sonnel Policy Review Meeting,  
red ink spells success.

A big chart in the Office of  
Personnel portrays progress  
made on each recommendation.  
A blue line represents the

(continued inside)

## PROGRESS REPORT (cont'd.)

planned schedule for implementation, and the red line stands for progress actually made.

Moving into mid-December, most task forces were "in the red."

All 11 intradepartmental task forces were driving ahead toward better personnel management in USDA, and implementation of a number of recommendations had been completed.

New authorities for personnel action had been delegated to agencies, at least 10 legislative proposals had been formulated on the basis of PPRM recommendations and sent to the Executive Offices, study and action was proceeding on numerous other fronts, and several recommendations had been referred to other staff offices within the Department. Each personnel recommendation was assigned to an individual in OP one week after the Sept. 25-29 PPRM, and task forces for a number of these were announced in late October.

### DELEGATIONS

On the basis of recommendations by the PPRM, requirements of prior approval by OP were eliminated and authority delegated to the agencies for:

- .assignments to certain key positions (formerly in 8 AR 328);
- .position classification of GS-13 personnel positions;
- .agency merit promotion plans; and
- .proposed Training and Promotion Agreements involving positions in the competitive service on an agency-wide or D.C. basis.

### ADVERSE ACTIONS AND APPEALS

On Dec. 7 the task force on recommendations 56 and 57--which call for the delegation of removal authority and the establishment of a Departmental appeals system for disciplinary cases--met for the third time and discussed a draft of proposed new regulations on adverse actions and appeals.

These regulations would delegate to each agency head authority to take all adverse actions affecting an employee, including removal for delinquency, misconduct, or unsatisfactory performance. At the same meeting, a draft of a proposed disciplinary hearing procedures manual was presented.

### RETIREMENT AND ANNUITIES

By mid-December CSC had received from OP recommendations for five

amendments of the Retirement Act. Drafted with the help of the agencies, these amendments would:

- . Peg annuities to the cost of living, allowing an annual change upward to follow rising living costs;
- . Allow retirement at 55 with 30 years of service without reduction in annuity;
- . Eliminate reduction in annuity for employees 55 or over who are involuntarily separated under conditions which entitle them to an immediate annuity;
- . Make retirement mandatory at 70 if the employee has five years or more of creditable service; and
- . Certain types of firefighters be included under special provision of the Retirement Act along with FBI agents and others because of the hazardous nature of their work.

#### INSURANCE AND PAY

Recommendations made to CSC on insurance and pay would:

- . Modify the decrease in group life insurance at 65 or after retirement;
- . Eliminate the distinction in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Act of 1959 with respect to dependent and non-dependent husbands of married female employees;
- . Eliminate the 10-year aggregate period now required for a longevity step increase;
- . Guarantee a minimum increase of two steps when an employee is promoted in grade; and
- . Provide periodic step increases after 52 weeks for all employees regardless of grade.

#### PERFORMANCE RATING AND PROMOTIONS

Agencies reviewed and returned to OP a draft of proposed legislation to amend the Performance Rating Act of 1950--abolishing the Performance Rating System and substituting a performance evaluation system. The bill was essentially the same as the one proposed by CSC in 1958.

The task force on the recommendation to review and revise USDA regulations to provide for retention of the best employees (35) was combined with the task force on the Performance Rating System.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recommendations 33 and 34 from the PPRM were that the Commission change "shall" to "may" in its instructions to consider qualified individuals outside the agency; and that 8 AR 404 restricting the filling of positions from sources outside the Department be abolished. In response, 8 AR 404 was deleted by OP.

#### RECRUITMENT

The task force on recommendation 21, which called for an improvement in the Department's competitive position in recruitment through extension of temporary appointment authority, discussed methods now available toward this end, those under consideration by CSC, and methods employed in other Federal agencies. The task force also considered the recommendation (17) on increased use of the student trainee program.

\* \* \* \* \*

The PPRM recommended payment of interview expenses and payment of travel expenses to the first post of duty. The Office of the General Counsel was asked by OP to prepare legal language for an amendment of the Administrative Expenses Act to implement these recommendations, and this was submitted to CSC along with the other legislative proposals.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another recommendation from the PPRM (28) was that reasonable maximum age limits be re-established for junior professional and entrance level examinations of special interest to the Department. In following this up, agencies were asked to prepare data indicating problems encountered as a result of maximum age limits--statistics on filling vacancies and progress of hirees.

#### SUPERVISORY AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Subcommittees for the task force on supervisory and management development had been appointed by mid-December and were swinging into action in these areas:

- .A basic philosophy of supervisory and management development for the Department;
- .Standards or criteria for supervisory and managerial positions;
- .Qualifications for these positions;
- .Selection of supervisors and managers; and
- .Evaluation of the job they do.



The subcommittee expected to draw on brainpower outside the task force as they began hashing out draft statements in these areas.

The task force, charged with breathing life into recommendations 29, 55, 93, 95, 97, and 103-118 spent much of its first meeting discussing the need for Departmental statements on supervisory and management development philosophy.

#### NEW TASK FORCE

A new task force was set up to work toward implementation of recommendation 47, which asks that USDA and CSC regulations be limited to one title, with 8 AR and the FPM slip-sheeted. Members are:

Dora E. Oliver, OP, Chairman  
T. W. Little, ARS  
Marion Quick, ARS  
C. K. Morrison, AMS  
Robert Poline, AMS  
Al Riggs, ASCS  
George Hickey, ASCS  
Harry Howard, FS  
Sophie Szumski, FS

This task force met and recommended waiting for CSC's revision of the FPM before proposing changes in 8 AR.

#### OTHER ACTION

Six seminars on employee-management relations were scheduled through Dec. 19 as partial implementation of recommendation 59, which called for the maintenance of a favorable climate toward employee affiliation with employee organizations. The seminars used experts in this field as discussion leaders.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recommendation 89 said a system should be established for determining the effectiveness of agency award programs. OP will continue during fiscal 1962 its trial system of reviewing CSC inspection reports on agencies and depicting their award programs graphically for transmission back to the agencies. This system will be evaluated for effectiveness throughout 1962 and modified as necessary.

\* \* \* \* \*

On the matter of "stacking", i.e., placing a person of one grade under the supervision of another person at the same grade level, OP responded to PPRM recommendation 128 by amending 8 AR 59b. The amendment permits agencies to classify a position in GS-15 at the same time the supervisory position is in GS-15, provided these conditions are met: The subordinate position must be clearly supported by classification standards and the position directly above must have been identified by CSC as properly allocable at GS-16 or above but with no space assignment for it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Recommendation 54c requested an objective and realistic definition of "rank" in Section 14 of the Veterans Preference Act. The Department asked CSC to back this recommendation, but CSC preferred to not define "rank".

#### REFERRED TO OTHER STAFF OFFICES

Support for legislation to authorize the waiver of collection of erroneous payments to civilian employees was communicated to B&F for referral to GAO. These other recommendations were referred as follows:

- .Improve and expand library facilities (90)  
Referred to Director of Library.

- .Plan new building construction and building modernization to include adequate provision for space, air conditioning, heating, ventilation, eating facilities, access to public transportation, parking, safety of operations, conference facilities, and fallout shelters (91)  
Referred to P&O.

- .Provide quality maintenance of rented space (92)  
Referred to P&O.

- .Pay full costs of transfers (132)  
Referred to B&F.





